



Security Council

Distr.: General
29 September 2014

Original: English

Letter dated 25 September 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter dated 25 September 2014 from the President of the Syrian Coalition, Hadi al-Bahra (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdallah Al-Mouallimi
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 25 September 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (Syrian Coalition), I am writing to call your urgent attention to reports of a series of appalling attacks carried out against a vulnerable population of Syrian refugees perilously trapped in camps in the Lebanese town of Arsal, near the border with Syria.

During the early hours of Thursday, 25 September 2014, elements of the Lebanese armed forces entered refugee camps located in Arsal, reportedly to conduct a counter-terrorist operation. Credible reports, however, indicate that Lebanese Army personnel, acting alongside sectarian elements, terrorized the camps' population of displaced Syrian refugees. Resident witnesses describe Lebanese armed forces setting fire to and destroying homes, attacking innocent women, children and elderly residents, and detaining residents en masse.

The Syrian Coalition warned the international community of the possible escalation of the situation in Arsal as a result of the worsening humanitarian situation and previous violent attacks. In a letter dated 4 August 2014 the Coalition's Special Representative to the United Nations, Najib Ghabbian, raised the issue of the violence in Arsal and urged the Security Council to take immediate action to protect the lives of Syrian citizens seeking refuge from the ongoing conflict in their home country. The letter also called upon the international community to ensure the Lebanese Government holds to account those responsible for the unacceptable actions. The international community has a responsibility to address the humanitarian situation and security conditions in Arsal as a matter of urgency.

We again call for immediate and decisive action to protect the population of innocent refugees in Arsal and other camps located near the Syria-Lebanon border. We urge that:

- (a) The United Nations urgently investigate the latest incident and report to the Security Council swiftly on circumstances leading to the incident, culpability and recommendations for next steps;
- (b) The Security Council authorize an expansion of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) explicitly to provide protection for the refugees;
- (c) Should the Security Council fail to authorize an expansion of the mandate of UNIFIL, that the United Nations deploy permanent observers into the refugee camps to monitor and report on the situation and to act as a deterrent against unacceptable treatment.

Syrian refugees face an intolerable situation. It is critical that they not be subjected to further trauma and violence when they seek refuge outside Syria from the tyrannies of Assad and ISIS inside Syria. It is critical that the United Nations use its good offices to ensure that any issues or incidents inside the refugee camps are addressed in a proportionate and responsible manner by countries accommodating our people.

(Signed) Hadi al-Bahra
President of the Syrian Coalition